RAJYA SABHA

Friday, the 18th March, 2005/27 Phalgna, 1926 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock,
[MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Additional funds to South Central Railway for passenger amenities

*241. SHRI NANDI YELLIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether South Central Railway approached Railway Board for grant of additional funds to the tune of Rs. 20 crores during the current year for various passenger amenities;

(b) if so, whether Government would assure of releasing this additional grant for the current year; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) to (c) There has been a demand for increased allotment from South Central Railway for passenger amenities works during 2004-05. Accordingly, the funds allotted to South Central Railway under plan head Passenger Amenities was increased from Rs. 13.66 crore in the Budget Grant to Rs. 27.90 crore in the Revised Grant.

श्री नंदी येल्लैया: माननीय सभापति महोदय, मेरे क्वेश्चन का उत्तर रेल मंत्री जी ने दिया है कि यात्री सुविधाओं को लिए साउथ सेंट्रल रेलवे को... ।

श्री सभापति: यह तो आपका कवेश्चन है।

श्री नंदी येल्लैया: सर, मेरा ही क्वेश्चन है और मैं ही सप्लीमेंट्री क्वेश्चन कर रहा हूं।

श्री सभापति: ठीक है, करिये।

श्री नंदी येल्लैया: सभापति महोदय, यात्री सुविधाओं के लिए साउथ सेंट्रल रेलवे को 13 करोड़ रुपये से बढ़ाकर करीब 28 करोड़ रुपये देने के लिए मैं मंत्री जी को धन्यवाद देता हूं। सभापति जी, आप तो जानते हैं कि रेल में यात्रा करने वालों को रेलवे स्टेशन पर प्रतीक्षा करनी पड़ती है, कभी ट्रेन एक्सीडेंट हो जाता है, कभी डि-रेलमेंट हो जाता है, कभी ट्रेन लेट चलती है, वहां पर रहने वाले यात्रियों को केटरिंग की, सफाई की, प्लेटफार्म की सुविधा बहुत कम है, इसीलिए यह करीब 28 करोड़ रुपया उन्हीं लोगों की सुविधा के लिए खर्च करने के लिए मैं मांग कर रहा हूं।

श्री सभापति: आपने मांग कर ली। अब मंत्री जी आप बोलिए।

श्री नंदी येल्लैया: हम वीआईपीज़, मिनिस्टर फर्स्ट क्लास में..।

श्री सभापति: मुझे माफ करना, आपकी बात सही है। आप क्वेश्चन करिये, इसमें मुझे कोई आपत्ति नहीं है, लेकिन आपको इतनी बड़ी बैकग्राउंड बनाने की जरूरत नहीं है।

श्री नंदी येल्लैया: सर, मैं यही बोल रहा हूं कि यात्री सुविधाओं के लिए साउथ सेंट्रल रेलवे को 13 करोड़ रुपये से बढ़ाकर करीब 28 करोड़ रुपये देने के लिए, मंत्री जी को धन्यवाद देते हुए, मैं मंत्रीजी से यह गुजारिश करूंगा कि इसको साल के अंदर, एक टाइम लिमिट के अंदर, जहां पर प्लेटफार्म की कमी है, केटरिंग की कमी है, सफाई का जरूरत है, जहां पर तीन-चार घंटे यात्रियों को इंतजार करना पड़ता है, इस साल के अंदर 28 करोड़ रुपये साउथ सेंट्रल रेलवे को जो फंड अलाट किया गया है, क्या इसको पूरा खर्च करेंगे? यह मैं मंत्री जी से पूछना चाहता हूं।

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, the hon. Member should be very, very happy and be delighted because the South Central Railway alone gets about 13 per cent of the total allotment. No other zone of the Railways gets this much. This year, it is almost double of what it was budgeted last year. Secondly, the question is provision of more facilities because of passengers' stranding at the platforms, etc. He is well aware that I have paid 4-5 visits to Andhra Pradesh alone to find out the position; I must say that the officer, the General Manager, has done works exceedingly well and has done a very good work. In what areas he has done the work? He has done upgradation of platforms, providing shelter and all other amenities which are more than basic amenities; I can say the desirable amenities which we were contemplating at almost all stations in Andhra Pradesh.

The amount required was really Rs. 20 crores additionally and it has been complied with making it to about Rs. 27 crores now. If the Railways again ask for some more money, we are prepared to consider it taking into account the need and necessity of the stations concerned.

श्री नंदी येल्लैया: सर, मैं मंत्री जी को दोबारा धन्यवाद देता हूं। उन्होंने कहा कि जिस वक्त मंत्री जी का इंस्पेक्शन होता है या मंत्री जी कहीं दौरे पर जाते हैं, जो पहले से उसका इंतजाम होता है। मेरा तजुर्बा है कि हम प्लेन से नहीं, बल्कि रेल से ज्यादा यात्राएं करते हैं। वहां के यात्रियों के बारे में मंत्री जी जिस अंदाज से कह रहे हैं, वह सही नहीं है। वहां बहुत-सी डिफिकल्टीज़ है, गंदगी है और मैं आपको दोबारा धन्यवाद करते हुए कहना चाहता हूं कि जो 20 करोड़ रुपया दिया गया है, उसे खर्च करना चाहिए, यही हमारा अनुरोध है।

SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Sir, Secunderabad Railway Station of the South Central Railway is India's first ISO 9001 certified station in India. There are five more stations and five trains are in the pipeline for ISO certification. This clearly shows how the South Central Railway is giving importance to passenger amenities. Even the income of South Central Railway has increased by Rs. 243 crores this year and accidents have reduced by 60 per cent. In view of this, I would like to know from the Government what basic minimum facilities are being provided to the physically handicapped people in the South Central Railway region.

SHRI R. VELU: In the last Budget Speech the hon. Minister made two announcements; and one of them is about the proper facilities to be given to the physically challenged persons. Accordingly, parking area, ramps to the stations, low level latrines, drinking water facilities, etc., etc., are being provided. Almost 212 A Class stations have now been provided with these facilities for the physicaily handicapped people. We are also trying to cover the remaining B Class stations in the course of three years to come. It means that we are taking care of that aspect not only with regard to South Central Railway, but for the country as a whole.

DR. M.S. GILL: Sir, I think I would join with the Southern MPs in thanking the Southern Minister for all the gifts given in the South. But would you let me know whether he has provided even Rs. 14 crores for amenities in the Northern Zone, which I made clear yesterday is double of every other Zone in the country? It is 7000 kms. of lines and it is based in Delhi next to his office. Would he also talk of the Northern Railway, please?

SHRI R. VELU: Sir, as I mentioned, support for the amenities comes from the internal resources generated by us, namely, from Development Fund. Depreciation Fund and also revenue on which we bank upon to draw this money. It is not a budgetary support as such. However, there is a scope for improvement in allocation. With regard to the specific question raised by the hon. Member, I would say that the Northern Region gets Rs. 21 crores ...(*Interruptions*)... the UPA Government does not discriminate against any region ...(*Interruptions*)... Even Rs. 21 crore is far higher what is allotted to my own region. That way we should be happy.

NACO to remove bottlenecks

*242. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) had offered a unique option to remove bottlenecks, streamline communications and ensure better utilization of funds;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the NACO had signed any Memorandum of Understanding with UNICEF in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

The National AIDS Control Programme Phase-II gives the highest priority to generating awareness on HIV/AIDS issues through communication and social mobilization. A range of contextual strategies is employed at the national and at State levels for generating awareness and promoting behaviour change.

In order to strengthen the ongoing communication efforts, a Communication Consortium on HIV/AIDS has been set up to bring together a number of partners so that sufficient funds could be mobilized. UNICEF acts as the secretariat for the consortium. An agreement to this effect has